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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000888

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CH](#) [CU](#) [EZ](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH RESPONSE TO JUNE 13 GAERC DEMARCHE

REF: A. STATE 105235

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 869

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Mike Dodman for reasons 1.4
B and D

[1](#)1. (C) On June 9, we discussed the points in ref A demarche with Mr. Michal Strouhal, Director of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Department at the Czech MFA. Strouhal provided the following responses:

[1](#)A. Kosovo: Strouhal emphasized the importance of the EU playing an active role in the future of Kosovo, which the GOCR will promote at the GAERC. Strouhal sees the future of Kosovo as linked to its EU perspective, but notes that the Czechs do not support full independence at this time. Strouhal also discussed the importance of standards, identifying the most important to the GOCR as the return of refugees and minority rights, and that it is important to involve the Serbs in the debate.

[1](#)B. Middle East Peace Process: The GOCR is not pleased that the Palestinian elections have been postponed and would like them to take place before the end of the year. Additionally, it is paying significant attention to the coordination of efforts between Israel and the PA on the Gaza withdrawal, but believes that the Roadmap needs to be updated to take this into account.

[1](#)C. Cuba: Strouhal noted the importance of EU Cuba policy to the GOCR, and indicated that it was the subject of "dynamic negotiations" within the PSC. However, even as one of the EU countries that was most opposed to lifting the June 2003 measures, Strouhal described the GOCR as "quite happy with the conclusions" for the GAERC, citing tough language on political prisoners and the expulsion of Czech and other EU politicians last month. The two exceptions are the question of inviting dissidents to national day receptions (which will not be covered by the Council's conclusions) and limiting high-level visits to foreign ministers. Assuming the June 9 PSC meeting would not reach agreement on this last point, Strouhal expected FM Svoboda to raise it at the GAERC. (Comment: Strouhal's assessment of the state of the draft Council declaration on Cuba was factually similar to that of his colleague on the Cuba desk-ref b-but his bottom line was very different. For instance, on national day invitations, Strouhal stressed the importance of a unified EU position, rather than the need to maintain contacts with dissidents.)

[1](#)D. US-EU Summit: Strouhal said the GOCR gives great weight to transatlantic relations with CFSP. Their main intervention to date on the US-EU Summit preparations has been to stress greater cooperation between EU-NATO.

[1](#)E. UN: The EU Foreign Ministers will meet next Thursday on the margins of the EU Summit to discuss the preparation for the UN Summit, but Strouhal said the Czechs are currently pleased with the planning.

[1](#)F. Iraq: Strouhal informed POLOFF that FM Svoboda will represent the CR at the conference in Brussels, and will deliver a speech expressing support for the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG). The GOCR sees the conference in "symbolic means." POLOFF questioned Strouhal about possible new initiatives or other tangible signs of support from the GOCR for the ITG. Strouhal said no new initiatives are planned (Note: DCM will discuss with more senior MFA officials on June 10).

[1](#)G. China: Strouhal is "sceptical" that the necessary conditions will be fulfilled in order for the arms embargo to be lifted this year, noting the CR's strong insistence on human rights improvements and an effective dialogue with a range of allies on security questions. Strouhal emphasized that a revised Code of Conduct would need to apply to all countries, not just China. In reference to this, Strouhal noted that the GOCR thought that the EU Summit conclusions should refer simply to the revised Code of Conduct, without specific mention of China.

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